

OSHA R. MESERVE (SBN 204240)  
 PATRICK M. SOLURI (SBN 210036)  
 SOLURI MESERVE, A LAW CORPORATION  
 510 8th Street  
 Sacramento, California 95814  
 Telephone: (916) 455-7300  
 Facsimile: (916) 244-7300  
 Email: osha@semlawyers.com  
 patrick@semlawyers.com

Attorneys for Local Agencies of the North Delta

**BEFORE THE**

**CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

HEARING IN THE MATTER OF  
 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER  
 RESOURCES AND UNITED STATES  
 BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
 REQUEST FOR A CHANGE IN POINT OF  
 DIVERSION FOR CALIFORNIA WATER FIX

**TESTIMONY OF SARAH HEMLY**

**LOCAL AGENCIES OF THE NORTH DELTA**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

My Name is Sarah Wallace Hemly. I grew up and graduated from highschool in Fair Oaks, California in 1996. I went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Architecture from the University of California at Berkley where I was a member of the women's rowing and rugby teams. After graduation I worked as a landscape architect in the bay area and Tahoe until I met my husband, Matthew Hemly and moved to Courtland, California in the middle of a pear orchard on Merritt Island. It is here that I became exposed to the immense amount of hard work, passion and rich history that exists in the Delta. Inspired by my husband's passion for the fruit and the area, I embarked on my own endeavor to launch a hard cider company. The journey to craft a unique beverage that would do justice to the fruit, the family, and our community, took me to France, England and finally to Tasmania. It is in Tasmania that I meet up with our now business partner, Chris Thomson. The two of us, with the help of the family, launched Hemly Cider in 2015.

**II. TESTIMONY****A. Hemly Cider**

Hemly Cider is just one of the many new innovative farm based products making state, national, and international waves out of the Delta. We are one of the first if not only, 100% estate grown pear ciders in California. Our mission is to make a cider that pays homage, not only to the amazing fruit coming out of the Delta, but also to the place we call home.

With the help of our Tasmanian partner, we have developed a cider unlike any other being produced in North America. Like great wine, great cider starts and ends with great fruit. Hemly Cider is crafted from fresh pressed estate grown fruit. It undergoes both a primary and malolactic fermentation and is then gently aged on Oak chips. We back sweeten with another press of fruit and then pasteurize and carbonate. You can find our products both in bottle and on tap throughout the State of California.

As of this writing we are being distributed throughout the State of California with plans to expand. We are in negotiations with the Kings and the Golden One Arena as we are the only cider that fits their grown and made in a 90-mile radius rules. We are planning and building a

Delta “Cider Door” and event center where people from all over the world can come and experience firsthand the beauty of the Delta, our pear orchards and our world class ciders. We will be unincorporated Sacramento County’s first and only Cidery.

**B. Other Unique Delta Agricultural Products**

Locally, we are not alone in our endeavors for promoting the Delta. Our neighbors down the road just recently opened a new restaurant called “Steamboat Landing”. They offer local produce as well as a full kitchen. The family is dependent on both local support as well as tourism to visit their farm, “Steamboat Acres”, where you can purchase fresh produce, enjoy a seasonal pumpkin patch, and lounge on their sandy beach!

There are numerous grape growing families launching new wine labels and new wine tasting experiences in our area. One such example is the new wine label, Muddy Boot Wines, recently launched by Phil and David Oglivie with their lifetime friend, Tom Merwin. Muddy Boot has been seeing great success throughout the United States.

With the rise in popularity of Chenin Blanc, and the Clarksburg appellation being one of the best in world to grow it, Muddy Boot has been winning awards and sales. They are also looking towards opening a local tasting room and growing their production.

For another example of the new generation, on the pear growing side; Chiles Wilson, Jr. has recently launched a new company called “Branch to Box”. This pioneering company sells boxes of fresh produce to companies who are looking for healthy fresh seasonal snacks for their employees.

All of us depend on the continued health and productivity of the Delta so that we can continue to grow both our companies and the future. If the health of the Delta were to collapse so could our companies. There is NO other place in the world we can reproduce the quality and experience of product. In today’s competitive market, the history, place and story of the Delta lends us an authenticity of product that today’s consumer is demanding. Traveling throughout the state both buyers and consumers understand the value of our products coming from the Delta. They are excited to purchase California grown and are forming a connection to the space and experience of the Delta that is essential to gaining new customers.

**C. Delta Agriculture Touches Sacramento and the World**

While attending UC Berkeley, I was exposed to Alice Waters and her pioneering Farm to Fork movement centered around her restaurant, Chez Panisse. Since my conversion I have watched as my hometown of Sacramento has evolved into a Farm to Fork haven that now hosts a large annual Farm to Fork event (attended by 50,000 people last year). It is almost a pre-requisite for any new urban restaurant to showcase local produce. Sacramento has recently launched into a marketing campaign to support this farm-to-fork experience. An essential piece to that is, of course, the numerous farms surrounding and within Sacramento County including the produce, wine, cider and art out of the Delta.

In the short time since I moved to the Delta in 2009, I have witnessed a large increase in interest in agritourism. An enormous amount of effort has been put into gaining tourism and visitors to the Delta. From wine tasting, farm stands, custom crafters and artists inspired by its history and natural beauty, the Delta is quickly gaining traction as a meaningful escape for Sacramento and Bay Area residents.

**III. CONCLUSION**

I am concerned that generations of work and years of effort may easily be destroyed or halted if the proposed Delta Tunnels are built and operated. With upwards of 14 years of construction, the direct conversion of farmland, indirect disturbances to agricultural operations from lower quality water available for farms, loss of productivity, the truck traffic, the noise pollution and disturbances will all significantly hinder and forever alter this jewel in California. The community has worked hard to promote the beauty and stewardship as a destination worth traveling to. The Tunnels would diminish this quality making it more challenging to host weddings, events and everyday visits.

Negative effects on the Delta communities are potentially enormous. The proposed truck traffic for 14 years, the damage to roads, to the visual environment, the noise pollution, the river pollution and runoff from construction, the seizure of land, homes and business. There is no positive side for our community. While it is possible that some of the larger businesses may survive, the small markets, restaurants, and places that depend on seasonal

1 visitors and workers will likely struggle. Innovation and new growth may also stagnate as we  
2 all wait to see if our industries can survive. There will be a generation of missed opportunities  
3 for us, for California and the world.

4 For these reasons, I believe that the Delta Tunnels would not be in public interest, either  
5 locally or from a broader statewide perspective that values agriculture and innovation.

6  
7 Executed on the 28th day of November 2017, at Courtland, California.

8  
9  
10   
11 Sarah Hemly